



Changes in PMS-SC

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Why in News

Recently, the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** has approved changes in the **Post Matric Scholarship to students belonging to Scheduled Castes (PMS-SC)**.

- Government is committed to give a big push and further impetus to this effort so that the **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education of SCs would reach up to the national standards within the 5 year period.**
 - GER is the number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.
 - The current GER in higher education is **26.3%**.
- The Central Assistance which was around **Rs. 1100 crore annually during 2017-18 to 2019-20 would be increased more than 5 times** to be around **Rs. 6000 crore annually during 2020-21 to 2025-26.**

Key Points

- **Post Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Castes:**

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** and **implemented through State Government and UT administration.**
- It provides **financial assistance to the SC students studying at post matriculation or post-secondary stage** to enable them to complete their education.
- These scholarships are **available for studies in India only** and are awarded by the government of the State/Union Territory to which the applicant actually belongs i.e. **permanently settled.**
- The **focus** of the scheme is on enrolling the poorest students, timely payments, comprehensive accountability, continuous monitoring and total transparency.
- **Income Ceiling:** Scholarships are paid to the students whose parents/guardians' income from all sources **does not exceed Rs. 2,50,000 per annum.**

- **New Changes:**
 - **Enrolment Campaign:**
 - Launching a campaign to **enrol the students from the poorest households passing the 10th standard**, in the higher education courses of their choice.
 - It is estimated that **1.36 crore poorest students are currently not continuing their education beyond 10th standard**, who would be brought into the higher education system in the next 5 years.
 - **Secure Online Platform:**
 - An online platform with robust **cybersecurity** measures that would assure transparency, accountability, efficiency, and timely delivery of the assistance without any delays.
 - States will **undertake fool-proof verification** of the eligibility, caste status, Aadhar identification and bank account details on the online portal.
 - **Direct Benefit Transfer:**
 - Unlike earlier, when funding was passed through state governments, financial assistance will be transferred by the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** mode and preferably using the **Aadhaar Enabled Payment System**.
 - Students will receive the Centre's share as soon as the state transfers its share as per fixed time schedule.
 - **New Funding Pattern:**
 - The Cabinet has approved a **total investment of Rs. 59,048 crore** with a new funding pattern of **60-40 for the Centre and States**.
 - Starting from 2021-22, the Central share would be released after ensuring that the concerned State Government has released their share.
 - This **replaces the existing committed liability system** and brings greater involvement of the Central government in this crucial scheme.
 - **Committed liabilities** are payments anticipated during a financial year for contracts concluded in previous years.
 - **Strong Monitoring Mechanisms:**
 - The scheme will be further strengthened through the conduct of social audits, annual third party evaluation, and half-yearly self-audited reports from each institution.

Source: PIB